

ANUM

A Solo Exhibition by Noor Mahnun

Exhibition Dates: 17 May - 6 July 2025

Press Preview: Thursday 15 May 5 - 7 pm

Opening & Afternoon Tea: Saturday 17 May, 3 – 7pm

Yeo Workshop Presents the First Singapore Solo Exhibition of Malaysian Painter Noor Mahnun — Marking 40 Years of Artistic Practice



Noor Mahnun, *Baju Kurung*, 2025, Oil on linen, 120 x 150 cm

Yeo Workshop is proud to announce the Singapore debut solo exhibition of acclaimed Malaysian artist **Noor Mahnun**, also known as Anum. This landmark presentation coincides with the 40th anniversary of her first exhibition at Video Diva, an artist-run space in Florence, Italy, in 1985. For both the artist and the gallery, this exhibition marks a pivotal chapter in the unfolding story of Southeast Asian contemporary art — one that foregrounds the nuanced contributions of women artists whose practices have long developed outside the spotlight, yet resonate with remarkable clarity and relevance today.

Anum's work — deeply personal, technically rigorous, and quietly subversive — straddles still life and figurative painting. Her oil-on-canvas compositions are marked by a delicate visual precision that elevates the everyday. With a distinctive aesthetic language shaped by her architectural training and European art education, Anum draws viewers into slow contemplation. Each canvas fuses narrative nuance with psychological subtlety, offering a compelling meditation on memory, place, and material culture.



Noor Mahnun, *Carnations*, 2023, Oil on linen, 30 x 25.5 cm

Known for her refined, disciplined approach to painting, Anum imbues the mundane with quiet vitality. Her palette and compositional logic reference not only the domestic and the familiar, but also the geographies that have shaped her life — from Kelantan and Kuala Lumpur to Florence and Braunschweig. Her most recent works reflect a return to the east coast of Malaysia, incorporating elements of local topography, shoreline, architecture, and regional symbolism into her visual lexicon.

Anum's works, while modest in scale, are conceptually rich — often characterized by a sense of psychological interiority and a dry wit. This exhibition, a first solo outside Malaysia in four decades, offers global collectors and curators a rare opportunity to engage with an artist whose introspective oeuvre is only now gaining international recognition.

One of the most poignant works in the exhibition depicts three boxers mid-spar — a reference that unfolds into a deeply personal memory. The painting draws from an old photograph of

Anum's father during his days at teachers' college in the early 1960s, boxing with friends. It is layered with echoes of childhood: the excitement of watching Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier matches on TV, the spectacle of local wrestling bouts her father loved, and the memory of visiting a childhood festival in Kota Bahru where the children once bought a pair of boxing gloves and tried to emulate the greats.

"We had a wonderful childhood," she recalls with quiet fondness. "Picnicking on the beach on weekends and memorable family holiday trips." The painting's background — the interior of her studio apartment in Ampang — becomes more than a setting; it is a spatial homage to memory, loss, and familial tenderness. These personal recollections, translated into oil, lend her work a resonance that extends far beyond the canvas.

About the Artist

Born in 1964 in Kelantan, Malaysia, Noor Mahnun trained in architecture in the United States before pursuing her Master of Fine Arts in painting at Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany. During her time in Europe, she held solo shows in Florence and across Germany, and upon returning to Malaysia, became an active figure in the local art scene — not only as an artist, but also as a curator, educator, and arts manager.

Her accolades include residencies at Rimbun Dahan (Malaysia) and Gunnery Studios (Australia), as well as a printmaking scholarship from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a senior fellowship from the Nippon Foundation's Asian Public Intellectuals program.

Following her participation in international art fairs such as Frieze Seoul and NADA Miami in 2024, Anum's work has gained renewed attention from collectors and institutions alike. Her quiet mastery and distinctive voice make her one of the most compelling mid-career artists from the region to watch.

About Yeo Workshop

Based in Singapore's Gillman Barracks, Yeo Workshop is a contemporary art gallery championing bold and innovative practices from Southeast Asia. The gallery's program spans traditional and new media. Known for fostering deep engagement with critical issues — from identity and ecology to urbanism and postcolonial narratives — Yeo Workshop is committed to shaping the future of art in the region and beyond.

Yeo Workshop regularly participates in leading international art fairs, most recently including ASIA NOW Paris, Frieze Seoul, Frieze New York and Liste Basel. In 2025, the gallery will expand its outreach with a year-long series of events, including artist talks, collectors' salons, life drawing sessions, and the launch of key monographs — deepening its commitment to education, collecting, and cultural diplomacy.

*For collectors, curators, and institutions attuned to the evolving narrative of Southeast Asian contemporary art, **Noor Mahnun: ANUM** offers a timely and intimate entry point into an*

extraordinary artistic mind. As one of Malaysia's few mid-career female painters working with such sustained commitment and quiet depth, Anum's practice underscores the importance of expanding the visibility and recognition of women artists in the region — not only as cultural contributors, but as enduring voices within global art history.

Exhibition Dates:

17 May - 6 July 2025, open Tues - Sat 11am - 7pm, Sun 12- 6pm

Location: Yeo Workshop, Gillman Barracks, Singapore

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